

## GALTON ISSUE ESCALTES

Citizens in Lincoln County have mounting concern as the calendar moves the Galton Study Project forward. Observers, skeptical at changing the designation of the Ten Lakes to the Galton Study Area have closely monitored the process.

When residents responding to the Forest Services' solicitations for public input were told that their suggestion for the Galton to be managed for a national recreation area were definitely not an option it became apparent that the Forest Service has an agenda and a goal of their own.

When Ranger Betty Holder claimed the study is not about wilderness, eyebrows raised as 81,000 acres of the area has already been designated a wilderness study area and been managed as defacto wilderness for about 33 years.

When observers verified that the boundaries of the Galton Study Area strangely appear to conform to the 171,000 acre Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness, long a priority of the Montana Wilderness Association, concern has grown to alarm.

Even more cause for concern surfaces as Forty-two thousand, nine hundred and five acres of the 170,285 acres is private land—much of it homesteaded by early settlers in Lincoln County who have passed that heritage on to us. Much of the water which brings life to our valley rises within the watershed.

Regardless of Forest Service "easy speak" the Galton is about access. Over 1,500 residents signed and sent petitions to Senators, Baucus, Tester, and Congressman Dennis Rehberg asking them to protect what has been our heritage and historic use. They have not responded in a meaningful way.

Now, in one more effort to petition high level policy makers I am bringing a resolution before the Montana Legislature. SJR 21 reiterates our desire for continued access and use of the Ten Lakes Area and requests that it be managed as a showcase healthy forest protected from the risky let burn policies which threaten our resources.

By far the greatest geographical area of the Galton does not meet either wilderness or inventoried roadless requirements. It has been roaded to provide access for logging operations, protection from insect infestations, fire management and access during my lifetime for all types of recreation—summer and winter.

In conclusion, private property should not be included in whatever plans the Forest Service has for the Galton Study Area. These property owners and I urge your support in sending this message to Congress which states our case...